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Standing Committee on General Government

Subcommittee report

Comité permanent des affaires gouvernementales

Rapport du sous-comité

2nd Session
41st Parliament

Wednesday 1 November 2017

2^e session
41^e législature

Mercredi 1^{er} novembre 2017

Chair: Grant Crack
Clerk: Sylwia Przedziecki

Président : Grant Crack
Greffière : Sylwia Przedziecki



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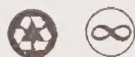
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON
GENERAL GOVERNMENTCOMITÉ PERMANENT DES
AFFAIRES GOUVERNEMENTALES

Wednesday 1 November 2017

Mercredi 1^{er} novembre 2017*The committee met at 1601 in committee room 2.*

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Good afternoon, everyone. I would like to call the Standing Committee on General Government to order.

This afternoon we are gathered to deal with the report from the subcommittee regarding Bill 160, An Act to amend, repeal and enact various Acts in the interest of strengthening quality and accountability for patients. We met on two occasions, as a committee: on Monday, October 30 and on Tuesday, October 31. As such, I would ask Ms. Thompson to read the subcommittee report into the record.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Your subcommittee on committee business met on Monday, October 30 and Tuesday, October 31, 2017, to consider the method of proceeding on Bill 160, An Act to amend, repeal and enact various Acts in the interest of strengthening quality and accountability for patients, and recommends the following:

(1) That the committee hold public hearings in Toronto, at Queen's Park, on Monday, November 20 and Wednesday, November 22, 2017, during its regular meeting times.

(2) That the committee direct its Chair to write to the House leaders of the recognized parties, requesting that a motion be presented to the House to authorize the Standing Committee on General Government to meet on Thursday, November 16 and Thursday, November 23, 2017, from 8:30 a.m. to 10:15 a.m., for the purpose of holding additional public hearings on the bill.

(3) That the Clerk of the Committee, in consultation with the Chair, post information regarding the committee's business, in English and French, on the Ontario parliamentary channel, on the Legislative Assembly website, and with the CNW Group newswire service.

(4) That the Clerk of the Committee distribute a copy of the posted information regarding the committee's business, in English and French, to the members of the committee.

(5) That interested people who wish to be considered to make an oral presentation on Thursday, November 16, 2017, (pending authorization from the House), should contact the Clerk of the Committee by 4 p.m. on Wednesday, November 8, 2017.

(6) That by 5 p.m. on Wednesday, November 8, 2017, the Clerk of the Committee send to the subcommittee members or their designates, by email, the list of potential witnesses who have requested to appear by 4 p.m. on Wednesday, November 8, 2017.

(7) That each subcommittee member or designate provide a ranked list of presenters for Thursday, November 16, 2017, (pending authorization from the House), to the Clerk of the Committee by 10 a.m. on Thursday, November 9, 2017. These witnesses must be selected from the original list distributed by the Clerk of the Committee.

(8) That interested people who wish to be considered to make an oral presentation on Monday, November 20; Wednesday, November 22; or Thursday, November 23, 2017, (pending authorization from the House), should contact the Clerk of the Committee by 4 p.m. on Wednesday, November 15, 2017.

(9) That by 5 p.m. on Wednesday, November 15, 2017, the Clerk of the Committee send to the subcommittee members or their designates, by email, the list of potential witnesses who have requested to appear by 4 p.m. on Wednesday, November 15, 2017.

(10) That each subcommittee member or designate provide a ranked list of presenters for Monday, November 20; Wednesday, November 22; or Thursday, November 23, 2017, (pending authorization from the House), to the Clerk of the Committee by 10 a.m. on Thursday, November 16, 2017. These witnesses must be selected from the original list distributed by the Clerk of the Committee.

(11) That the Clerk of the Committee provide members of the committee with an interim agenda for Thursday, November 16, 2017, (pending authorization from the House), by 5 p.m. on Thursday, November 9, 2017, and a final agenda by 4 p.m. on Friday, November 10, 2017.

(12) That the Clerk of the Committee provide members of the committee with interim agendas for Monday, November 20, Wednesday, November 22 and Thursday, November 23, 2017, (pending authorization from the House), by 5 p.m. on Thursday, November 16, 2017, and a final agenda by 4 p.m. on Friday, November 17, 2017.

(13) That, if the hearings are not oversubscribed at the time the final agendas are issued, the Clerk of the Committee be authorized to schedule witnesses into the remaining time slots on a first-come, first-served basis.

(14) That the Minister or Deputy Minister of Health and Long-Term Care be invited to appear before the committee as the first witness and that the Minister or Deputy Minister be offered up to 10 minutes for a presentation, followed by up to 20 minutes for questions by committee members, divided equally by caucus.

(15) That groups and individuals be offered five minutes for their presentations, followed by up to nine minutes for questions by committee members, three minutes per caucus.

(16) That the deadline for receipt of written submissions be 12 noon on Thursday, November 23, 2017.

(17) That the research officer provide the committee with a summary of presentations by 5 p.m. on Thursday, November 23, 2017.

(18) That the amendments to the bill be filed with the Clerk of the Committee by 1 p.m. on Friday, November 24, 2017.

(19) That the committee meet on Monday, November 27 and Wednesday, November 29, 2017, during its regular meeting times, for clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 160.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Thank you very much, and well done.

Is there any further discussion on the report from the subcommittee? Mr. Baker.

Mr. Yvan Baker: I'd like to propose a small amendment, if I may. Is this the time to do that?

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Feel free. Yes.

Mr. Yvan Baker: Okay. If we look at the dates for the public hearings, we've got one on one week and then three days of hearings on another week. What I was going to propose was that we schedule public hearings on Wednesday, November 15, from 8:30 to 10:15 a.m. and cancel the proposed hearings on Thursday, November 23. I have a motion I can—

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Further discussion—*Interjection.*

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): We'll just wait a second. Do you want to put the motion?

Mr. Yvan Baker: If I may, yes.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Okay. If you want to read the motion, just so that everyone is clear, and then we'll go to Ms. Thompson after.

Mr. Yvan Baker: Sure. Let me just read the motion.

I move that we schedule public hearings for Bill 160 on Wednesday, November 15, from 8:30 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. and cancel proposed hearings on Thursday, November 23.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Thank you very much. Ms. Thompson.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I would just like to remind everyone in the committee that the dates that we chose for the hearings were considered and agreed upon recognizing that members of the various parties would have some conflicts. In order for everybody to be present at the table who needs to be, we did agree preliminarily to push the dates off to accommodate the people who need to be here.

Mr. Yvan Baker: Okay, I appreciate that. The consideration is twofold: One is that it spaces it out, but also, I know this would help ensure that these hearings don't conflict with the estimates committee. We're trying to alleviate that conflict too.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Yes. Well, that's what we did with the first set of dates.

Teresa, how do you feel about that?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I would prefer to continue on with the dates that were originally agreed to, simply because I know that there would have been some pre-discussions and thought put into the dates that would accommodate France being in this committee—of course, I'm going to speak to France. That's why I would not agree to that motion, for those reasons.

Mr. Yvan Baker: Do you know—

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Mr. Baker.

Mr. Yvan Baker: I don't know if there's a specific conflict that the members know that they have on that particular day, but I think this would ensure that we have the same total number of hearing hours, right? Just for clarity, I'm not trying to reduce the number of total hours of hearings, anyway. I would think, unless there's a particular conflict that your folks have, that this would make it easier for all the members on all sides, because you wouldn't have most of the hearings concentrated in one week. And estimates conflicts with it so it will be a scheduling conflict, probably, on both sides of the aisle. That's where I'm coming from on it.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Further discussion? Ms. Thompson.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: We did consider the schedule of the members who are meeting in estimates, and we did settle and agree to the dates that we have recorded in the minutes from those two meetings. I don't believe there are any conflicts with the dates as they're recorded here, based on our previous discussions.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Further discussion? Mr. Baker.

Mr. Yvan Baker: An idea would be if you wanted to consult with those members briefly as to whether or not this would be easier—because this is genuinely meant to make it easier for everybody. If you wanted, we could take a little recess or something like that. I'm open to that if that helps.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Ms. Armstrong?

Interjections.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Okay. Mr. Baker, are you requesting a recess at this point?

Mr. Yvan Baker: I'm requesting a recess. I'll let the members share how much time they need.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Do we have consent, and how much time?

Interjection: Five?

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Five minutes? Okay, so we will recess for five minutes, effective immediately. See you at 4:15.

The committee recessed from 1611 to 1616.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): The five minutes is up. I would call the meeting back to order. Is there willingness to extend the five minutes? Mr. Baker.

Mr. Yvan Baker: I move that we extend the five minutes.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): For?

Interjections.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): It will be an indeterminate amount at this time.

The committee recessed from 1617 to 1618.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Okay, back to order.

During your absence, Ms. Armstrong, the committee decided to extend the five minutes and allow you to come back in, so that's fantastic. There was a recess called by Mr. Baker.

Further discussion? Ms. Armstrong.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I checked, and we'd say no, we wouldn't want those changes, because there was already an allowance to have a date on the 16th of November for the fact that November 13 is a vacation and our Legislature isn't sitting. We already have the one on the 16th, so I would say no. I would ask for a recorded vote on that.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): That is in order. Is there further discussion on the motion which amends the timing? Ms. Thompson.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Just as we finalize the discussion before the vote, I want to share my support for our colleague from the NDP caucus. We did put a lot of work into identifying the timeline that has been recorded in the minutes read into the record today. I really think, based on that work that was put into it, we should respect the efforts and leave it status quo.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Further discussion? There being none, I shall call for the vote on Mr. Baker's motion.

Ayes

Anderson, Baker, Martins, Vernile, Wong.

Nays

Armstrong, Munro, Thompson.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): I declare Mr. Baker's motion carried.

Is there any further discussion on the subcommittee report? Mr. Baker.

Mr. Yvan Baker: I'd like to move another motion, Chair, if I may.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Feel free.

Mr. Yvan Baker: I move that we change the amendment deadline to 5 p.m. on Thursday, November 23.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Sorry, under which number?

Mr. Yvan Baker: I think it's (18).

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Number (18) currently reads, "That amendments to the bill be filed with the

Clerk of the Committee by 1 p.m. on Friday, November 24, 2017." You're proposing to move it to the day before, which would be Thursday, November 23.

Further discussion? Mr. Baker.

Mr. Yvan Baker: In light of the previous motion passing, it just gives us more time to review amendments. Since the hearings will end a day sooner, I'm proposing that we move the deadline for amendments back a day. That just gives us more time to process the amendments. The time from the end of hearings to the deadline hasn't changed.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Further discussion?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Sorry, which—

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): We're looking at number (18).

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: You want to change the date and the time; is that correct?

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Yes. It would read, "That amendments to the bill be filed with the Clerk of the Committee by 5 p.m. on Thursday, November 23, 2017."

Further discussion? Ms. Thompson.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Can the member drill down and tell us how it gives us more time—because, essentially, we're losing a day.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Mr. Baker.

Mr. Yvan Baker: It gives us more time to consider the amendments because they would have to be in slightly earlier. Typically, we prepare amendments after hearing from people who've testified at the hearings. If you take a look at the motion that was just passed, we cancelled the hearings on Thursday, November 23. That was going to be the last day of hearings. Therefore, now the last day of hearings is the 22nd. So the hearings are ending a day earlier, and I'm simply proposing that the deadline for amendments be moved back a day earlier to conform with that.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I would just like to say, on behalf of the people who were here working on the details, that the government committee members might be well-advised to make sure they do their homework before having to come back and do amendments to efforts that were put forward in a sincere effort to make sure it works.

I find it frustrating that because somebody in the backroom took a look at everything that's happening and realized that the government wasn't getting their way with everything—it seems like now they want to come in and change everything around, which is a little frustrating. I just want to put that on the record.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Ms. Armstrong.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: If you're just changing (18), it also looks like it conflicts with the research officer under number (17)—"provide the committee with a summary of presentations by 5 p.m."—and then we're supposed to change number (18) to "by 5 p.m." Does that work? The officer is going to be here presenting his presentation at 5 p.m. on Thursday, November 23, but

we're going to have to have our deadline at 5 p.m. Is that a problem?

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): It's a good point. Thank you.

Further discussion?

Mr. Yvan Baker: That's a helpful point. That's an amendment that would perhaps make sense—that we move it up to earlier that day.

Just a recap: Currently, in the report, we have the research officer providing the committee with a summary of presentations by 5 p.m. on Thursday, November 23. Originally, the deadline for filing amendments was 1 p.m. the next day. Would we want to make it 9 a.m. on Thursday, November 23? That would be an option.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Thank you. Ms. Armstrong.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I have an observation. In light of all these changes, I would prefer that we put this off in order to get our proper sync times. At this point, we're piecemealing all this. It can get quite confusing, and perhaps we don't look like we're as organized as we should be.

I respect the fact that the government wants to make some changes, but I would like those changes in sequence so that we can actually vote on them once. I don't want to end up voting on something, and then we forget that something else is connected to it, just because we're going back and forth. That's my suggestion.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Thank you very much. Further discussion? Mr. Baker.

Mr. Yvan Baker: Ms. Armstrong, I appreciate the feedback that you're providing. In that spirit, I'm listening to what you're saying, and your point is well taken on number (17). I think you're right, and we should move that up as well.

Again, the hearings are going to be ending a day earlier than was originally planned for in the subcommittee report, so the research officer, in theory, should be able to present the summary earlier as well.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Okay. In order to proceed, there's a different process we could use here. Would you like to make an amendment to this amendment that's before us? That's an option to deal with (17). Ms. Armstrong was also mentioning that we put this off. I'm looking for further discussion. Mr. Baker.

Mr. Yvan Baker: Chair, on procedural issues, I'd appreciate your counsel, but I'm happy to propose a motion to amend item number (17).

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): It would have to be someone else to amend your motion. If you wanted to deal with this one—or perhaps there is someone else who could move that amendment?

The other option would be to withdraw the current amendment and then put forward a new amendment that would deal with both.

Ms. Vernile.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: We're just going to amend Mr. Baker's motion, if we may.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): The floor is yours.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: Thank you. I move that the legislative researcher provide a summary of public hearings by 12 noon on Thursday, November 23.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): That is not an amendment to the motion. If you would like to put an amendment forward, you could say, "I move an amendment to Mr. Baker's motion," which would add this on.

Interjection.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Is there anyone willing to take a five-minute recess?

Interjection: Sure.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Thank you very much. The meeting will be recessed for five minutes.

The committee recessed from 1628 to 1635.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): The five minutes are up, so I'll call the meeting back to order. Mr. Baker.

Mr. Yvan Baker: I would like to move that we have another five-minute recess to allow the Clerk to—

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Let's say 10.

Mr. Yvan Baker: Sorry?

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Perhaps 10?

Mr. Yvan Baker: Ten is fine as well.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Is the committee in consensus with 10?

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: How many more amendments do you have?

Mr. Yvan Baker: I have this boxful of—

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): We will take a 10-minute recess, effective immediately.

The committee recessed from 1635 to 1651.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Back to order. Mr. Baker.

Mr. Yvan Baker: Chair, I would like to move a motion, if I may.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): There is a previous motion on the table.

Mr. Yvan Baker: I would like to withdraw for the time being the motion on the floor.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Okay, it is withdrawn.

Ms. Soo Wong: Or defer?

Mr. Yvan Baker: Or defer, or whatever the terminology is that I should be using.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): It's fair to withdraw it, as you said, so that's fine. You can also reintroduce it at a future time as well, if you feel the need. Mr. Baker, the floor is yours.

Mr. Yvan Baker: I would like move to a different motion.

I move that, in order to accommodate the committee's date change, the following changes be made to the subcommittee report:

—in item (2), the words "Thursday, November 23" be struck out and replaced with "Wednesday, November 15";

—in item (5), the words "Wednesday, November 15 or" be inserted after "oral presentation on";

—in item (7), the words "Wednesday, November 15 or" be inserted after "list of presenters for";

—in item (8), the word “or” be inserted after “November 20”, and the words “or Thursday, 23, 2017, (pending authorization from the House)” be struck out;

—in item (10), the word “or” be inserted after “November 20” and the words “or Thursday, November 23, 2017, (pending authorization from the House)” be struck out;

—in item (12), the word “and” be inserted after “November 20”, and the words “and Thursday, November 23, 2017, (pending authorization from the House)” be struck out.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Okay, I believe that that’s clear. Further discussion?

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Is it worth it?

Ms. Soo Wong: Let’s call the question.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Further discussion? There being none, I shall call for the vote on Mr. Baker’s motion. Those in favour? Any opposed? I declare Mr. Baker’s amendment to the subcommittee report carried.

Having said that, is there any further discussion on the subcommittee report? Mr. Baker.

Mr. Yvan Baker: Chair, I would like to move an amendment to item number (17).

I move that the legislative researcher provide a summary of public hearings by 12 noon on Thursday, November 23.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Further discussion on that motion?

Interjection.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): At 12 noon on Thursday, November 23—same date; different time. Further discussion?

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Can I just ask for the rationale for the change?

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): You can.

Further discussion? Mr. Baker.

Mr. Yvan Baker: The objective of all of these changes is to move the date of the deadline for amendments back one day. Therefore, a number of days have to subsequently be amended to make sure that that aligns with that change. As Ms. Armstrong pointed out earlier, this date needs to be moved to accommodate that.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Further discussion? There being none, I shall call for the vote on Mr. Baker’s motion to change the time from 5 p.m. to 12 p.m. on November 23. Those in favour? Any opposed? I declare Mr. Baker’s motion to change the time from 5 p.m. on Thursday, November 23, 2017, to 12 noon on Thursday, November 23, 2017, carried.

Ms. Armstrong?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I’d like to ask, is there anything in the standing orders that speaks to the fact that this has been altered so extensively that it should be discussed in a fulsome way when a subcommittee meets, as opposed to, again, patchwork. In that vein, is there some standing order that speaks to that this is not even anything that was agreed to originally and it’s been changed so dramatically that perhaps it should go back to the original people who actually sit on the committee to

have that proper discussion—or at least review what’s been proposed—so they can agree that that makes sense for what they want?

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): To answer your question—I imagine it’s a point of order—there is nothing in the standing orders that would accommodate your request. The way the standing orders are written is that the subcommittee can meet and the power of this committee supersedes any of a subcommittee. Although I wouldn’t say it’s unusual, it is within the realms of the responsibility of a committee to do exactly what you’re doing here this afternoon.

Further discussion? Mr. Baker.

Mr. Yvan Baker: Thank you, Chair. I like to break new ground.

Interjection: Here it comes.

Mr. Yvan Baker: I move that we change the amendment deadline in item number (18) from 1 p.m. on Friday, November 24, 2017, to 5 p.m. on Thursday, November 23, 2017.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Further discussion on Mr. Baker’s motion to change the date for amendments to be filed with the Clerk of the Committee to 5 p.m. on Thursday, November 23, as opposed to 1 p.m. on Friday, November 24. Further discussion?

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Same rationale?

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Ms. Thompson?

There being no further discussion I shall call for the vote on Mr. Baker’s motion. Those in favour? Those opposed? I declare the motion to change the fact that the amendments will be filed with the Clerk of the Committee at 5 p.m. on Thursday, November 23, 2017, carried.

Further discussion. Ms. Wong?

Ms. Soo Wong: Mr. Chair, I need to get some clarification on item number (14) of the subcommittee report. I’m reading here that the subcommittee recommended that the minister or deputy minister be invited before this committee as the first witness. I wasn’t at the subcommittee. I need to hear the rationale of why the minister—this is a public meeting, okay? The minister of the crown tables the report for the debate, so I need to know who at the subcommittee made this recommendation—because I want to hear the public. I don’t consider the minister public. I want to hear the agencies and the individuals who care about Bill 160.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: Stakeholders.

Ms. Soo Wong: The stakeholders, yes. Thank you, MPP Vernile.

I need to hear who made this motion and what’s the rationale for asking the minister to come before this committee. That’s where I want to get some clarity. This is unusual.

1700

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Further discussion? Ms. Armstrong.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I wasn’t at the original subcommittee but I can give you what I would perceive. If I was a minister, I’d be glad to come in public and present on a bill that I’m responsible for. We need to hear

from the minister. If we have questions, it would be nice to ask them. I bet you that a lot of people who are going to come and present would probably be very impressed that the minister is coming forward to acknowledge—it would go a long way, that they're here to explain their bill and that they support the bill and the reasons why.

I feel that it's very valuable for us to have comments and it's also very valuable for the people presenting to see the minister making the time to be transparent and held accountable to some of the questions. That's how I view it. In the future, when we're government, if we're government, I'll be happy to come and present.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Ms. Thompson?

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: The people who sat in the subcommittee were France Gélinas, Lou Rinaldi and myself. The good member from London—Fanshawe absolutely captured the essence in which we all agreed to having the minister or deputy come forward. Well done.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Further discussion? Ms. Wong.

Ms. Soo Wong: Mr. Chair, this is setting a new precedent—because all of us in this room, right now, the members of this committee, sit on a lot of committees. I know that the minister goes to public accounts and to estimates. They go to public accounts and estimates committees, for 10, 12, 15 hours, what have you, to deal with the bill. I'm pleasantly surprised because I'm sure that Bill 160—I'll be honest with you; there's a lot of interest in this bill. I think, for clarity, I would like to hear it, because the end result of a bill is the implementation by those stakeholders that we're talking about.

The implementation for this bill is not the minister. Let's be very frank about that. The implementation for this bill is those people whose lives are going to be affected—or improved, because there are different sections of Bill 160. Coming from the health care sector, I would love to hear them. The minister had led the discussion on Bill 160 for second reading, and now you're taking the public's time for, let me see, 20 minutes—about 30 minutes.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Half an hour.

Ms. Soo Wong: Where I am coming from, I really want to hear the real stakeholders. When we make a law, when we make a change, an amendment, to improve, I really want to hear the stakeholders. We get criticized by the opposition when we don't give enough time, and now you want to have the minister or the deputy minister taking committee time. We're setting a new trend, Mr. Chair. As a former Chair of the finance committee, sitting on the Legislative Assembly committee, and now this general government—we are setting a new way of a bill being introduced, to ask the minister to come. I hear the comments made. I beg to differ. I just want to be on record as well.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Ms. Armstrong?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I respect your point of view. However, there's nothing wrong with doing things differently and there's nothing wrong with making changes to the way we do things in order to accommo-

date the public, and the minister being present. With all due respect, I think that just because something has been done for 50 years doesn't mean that there are not ways we can improve upon on how we do things today. Having the minister come and present goes a long way into the public's perception of the responsibilities of a minister and also to the committee asking questions of the minister.

I can tell you, when I had my briefing, it was—I have to congratulate the ministry for giving us two briefings on different parts of the bill. It's an omnibus bill—it's a big bill—and I do have some questions I would like to ask the minister directly from when I had the briefing, so it would be helpful to me if that was the case.

I'm not going to go back and forth, because I know you're in a bit of a rush and you want to get out of here, but the point is, if you don't want the minister here you certainly can move that amendment and we can vote on it.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Ms. Thompson, and then I will make some clarification remarks.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Okay. I just wanted to draw to the attention of the people who weren't present during the subcommittee conversation that the table did make us aware of the fact that it's absolutely our right and our opportunity to ask the minister or deputy to come to our committee. I remember saying specifically that I'm open to that idea. The member from the NDP caucus absolutely felt there was merit as well. And the member from London—Fanshawe made a very good point just moments ago.

This is a significant bill; it's an omnibus bill, and we need to have time to drill down accordingly because we don't want anything to be skated over. This just gives us, as the opposition, an opportunity to have better dialogue with the minister and/or his deputy. I think the public would expect us to have time to drill down on such an extensive bill so that we are doing, indeed, our due diligence.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Thank you for the discussion. I'll just clarify: It is not unusual for a minister to be asked to come before committee. We do have a checklist that is used by the table and myself that guides not only this committee but other committees as well. The committee is free, through the subcommittee, to invite a minister or a deputy minister or to request technical briefings on a particular bill. That is all in order. It's up to the committee to agree on how they want to proceed. That's the right of the committee.

Even though there is a request that has been made, it's up to the minister and/or the ministry to determine whether they feel it's necessary or appropriate to come before committee.

Ms. Wong.

Ms. Soo Wong: Mr. Chair, through you to the members who were at the subcommittee: If there's over-subscription of witnesses coming before this committee for public hearings, are you saying to me that you're going to give the ministers—

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: No, there's not—

Ms. Soo Wong: Okay—versus the general public?

Anyway, Mr. Chair, I'm going to be moving to delete item number (14). I'm going to take the advice of the member from the third party to move to delete item number (14) from this list.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): That is in order. Ms. Wong has moved deletion of item (14) in the subcommittee report.

Ms. Thompson?

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I need to make sure this is very explicit and on the record: At the time we made the decision to take up the opportunity presented to us to invite the minister or deputy to this committee, the public's opportunity to come forward to share deputations was not oversubscribed, and in no way was the invitation extended to the minister and/or the minister's deputy taking away the public's opportunity to come forward on this bill.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Further discussion on Ms. Wong's motion?

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Recorded vote, please.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): There has been a request for a recorded vote, which is in order.

Further discussion? There being none, I shall call for the vote.

Ayes

Anderson, Baker, Rinaldi, Vernile, Wong.

Nays

Armstrong, Munro, Thompson.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): I declare Ms. Wong's motion to delete item (14) from the subcommittee report carried.

Further discussion? There being no further discussion, I believe we would need to adopt the report of the subcommittee, as amended.

Is there any further discussion on the subcommittee report, as amended? There being none, I shall call for the vote. Those in favour of the report of the subcommittee, as amended, carrying? Any opposed? I declare the report of the subcommittee, as amended, carried.

I believe that's the business we have to conduct today. Are there any questions or comments? There being none, I declare the Standing Committee on General Government adjourned.

The committee adjourned at 1710.

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